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THE STATE OF THE ODDS.

THERE appears every day in the newspapers an account of the betting on the principal forthcoming races. The betting on such races as the Two Thousand Guineas, the Derby, and the Oaks, often begins more than a year before the races are run; and during the interval, the odds laid against the different horses engaged in them vary repeatedly, in accordance with the reported progress of the animals in their training, or with what is learned respecting the intentions of their owners. Many who do not bet themselves, find an interest in watching the varying fortunes of the horses which are held by the initiated to be leading favourites; or to fall into the second rank, or merely to have an outside chance of success. It is amusing to notice, too, how frequently the final state of the odds is falsified by the event; how some 'rank outsider' will run into the first place, while the leading favourites are not even 'placed.'

It is in reality a simple matter to understand the betting on races (or contests of any kind), yet it is astonishing how seldom those who do not actually bet upon races have any inkling of the meaning of those mysterious columns which indicate the opinion of the betting world respecting the probable results of approaching contests, equine or otherwise.

Let us take a few simple cases of 'odds,' to begin with; and, having mastered the elements of our subject, proceed to see how cases of greater complexity are to be dealt with.

Suppose the newspapers inform us that the betting is 2 to 1 against a certain horse for such and such a race, what inference are we to deduce? To learn this, let us conceive a case in which the *true* odds against a certain event are as 2 to 1. Suppose there are three balls in a bag, one being white, the others black. Then, if we draw a ball at random, it is clear that we are twice as likely to draw a black as to draw a white ball. This is technically expressed by saying that the odds are 2 to 1 *against* drawing a white ball; or 2 to 1 *on* (that is, in favour of) drawing a black ball. This being under-

stood, it follows that, when the odds are said to be 2 to 1 against a certain horse, we are to infer that, in the opinion of those who have studied the performance of the horse, and compared it with that of the other horses engaged in the race, his chance of winning is equivalent to the chance of drawing one particular ball out of a bag of three balls.

Observe how this result is obtained: the odds are 2 to 1, and the chance of the horse is as that of drawing one ball out of a bag of three—three being the sum of the two numbers 2 and 1. This is the method followed in all such cases. Thus, if the odds against a horse are 7 to 1, we infer that the *cognoscenti* consider his chance equal to that of drawing one particular ball out of a bag of eight.

A similar treatment applies when the odds are not given as so many to *one*. Thus, if the odds against a horse are as 5 to 2, we infer that the horse's chance is equal to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag containing five black and two white balls—or seven in all.

We must notice also that the number of balls may be increased to any extent, provided the proportion between the total number and the number of a specified colour remains unchanged. Thus, if the odds are 5 to 1 against a horse, his chance is assumed to be equivalent to that of drawing *one* white ball out of a bag containing six balls, only one of which is white; or to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag containing sixty balls, of which ten are white—and so on. This is a very important principle, as we shall presently see.

Suppose there are two horses (amongst others) engaged in a race, and that the odds are 2 to 1 against one, and 4 to 1 against the other—what are the odds that one of the two horses will win the race? This case will doubtless remind our readers of an amusing sketch by Leech, called—if we remember rightly—'Signs of the Commission.' Three or four undergraduates are at a 'wine,' discussing matters equine. One propounds to his neighbour the following question: 'I say, Charley, if the odds are 2 to 1 against *Rataplan*, and 4 to 1 against *Quick March*, what's the betting about the pair?'—'Don't know, I'm sure,' replies Charley;

'but I'll give you 6 to 1 against them.' The absurdity of the reply is, of course, very obvious; we see at once that the odds cannot be heavier against a pair of horses than against either singly. Still, there are many who would not find it easy to give a correct reply to the question. What has been said above, however, will enable us at once to determine the just odds in this or any similar case. Thus—the odds against one horse being 2 to 1, his chance of winning is equal to that of drawing one white ball out of a bag of three, one only of which is white. In like manner, the chance of the second horse is equal to that of drawing one white ball out of a bag of five, one only of which is white. Now, we have to find a number which is a multiple of both the numbers three and five. Fifteen is such a number. The chance of the first horse, modified according to the principle explained above, is equal to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag of fifteen of which five are white. In like manner, the chance of the second is equal to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag of fifteen of which three are white. Therefore, the chance that one of the two will win is equal to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag of fifteen balls of which eight (five added to three) are white. Thus there remain seven black balls, and therefore the odds are 8 to 7 on the pair.

To impress the method of treating such cases on the mind of the reader, we take the betting about three horses—say 3 to 1, 7 to 2, and 9 to 1 against the three horses respectively. Then their respective chances are equal to the chance of drawing (1) one white ball out of four, one only of which is white; (2) a white ball out of nine, of which two only are white; and (3) one white ball out of ten, one only of which is white. The least number which contains four, nine, and ten is 180; and the above chances, modified according to the principle explained above, become equal to the chance of drawing a white ball out of a bag containing 180, when (1) 45, (2) 40, and (3) 18 are white. Therefore, the chance that one of the three will win is equal to that of drawing a white ball out of a bag containing 180 balls, of which 103 (the sum of 45, 40, and 18) are white. Therefore, the odds are 103 to 77 on the three.

One does not hear in practice of such odds as 103 to 77. But betting-men (whether or not they apply just principles of computation to such questions, is unknown to us) manage to run very near the truth. For instance, in such a case as the above, the odds on the three would probably be given as 4 to 3—that is, instead of 103 to 77, or, which is the same thing, 412 to 308, the published odds would be 412 to 309.

And here a certain nicety in betting has to be mentioned. In running the eye down the list of odds, one will often meet such expressions as 10 to 1 against such a horse offered, or 10 to 1 wanted. Now, the odds of 10 to 1 accepted may be taken to imply that the horse's chance is equivalent to that of drawing a certain ball out of a bag of eleven. But if the odds are offered and not taken, we cannot infer this. The offering of the odds implies that the horse's chance is *not better* than that above mentioned, but the fact that they are not taken implies that the horse's chance is *not so good*. If no higher odds are offered against the horse, we may infer that his chance is *very little worse* than that mentioned above. Similarly, if the odds of 10 to 1 are asked for, we infer that the horse's

chance is *not worse* than that of drawing one ball out of eleven; if the odds are not obtained, we infer that his chance is *better*; and if no lower odds are asked for, we infer that his chance is *very little better*.

Thus, there might be three horses (A, B, and C) against whom the nominal odds were 10 to 1, and yet these horses might not be equally good favourites, because the odds might not be taken, or might be asked for in vain. We might accordingly find three such horses arranged thus:

Odds.	
A.....	10 to 1 (wanted).
B.....	10 to 1 (taken).
C.....	10 to 1 (offered).

Or these different stages might mark the upward or downward progress of the same horse in the betting. In fact, there are yet more delicate gradations, marked by such expressions respecting certain odds, as—*offered freely*, *offered*, *offered and taken* (meaning that some offers only have been accepted), *taken*, *taken and wanted*, *wanted*, and so on.

As an illustration of some of the principles we have been considering, let us take from the day's paper* the state of the odds respecting the 'Two Thousand Guineas.' It is presented in the following form:

TWO THOUSAND GUINEAS.

7 to 2	against <i>Rosicrucian</i> (off.).
6 to 1	against <i>Pace</i> (off. 7 to 1 w.).
10 to 1	against <i>Green Sleeve</i> (off.).
100 to 7	against <i>Blue Gown</i> (off.).
180 to 80	against Sir J. Hawley's lot (t.).

This table is interpreted thus: Bettors are willing to lay the same odds against *Rosicrucian* as would be the true mathematical odds against drawing a white ball out of a bag containing two white and seven black balls, but no one is willing to back the horse at this rate. On the other hand, higher odds are not offered against him. Hence it is presumable that his chance is somewhat less than that above indicated. Again, bettors are willing to lay the same odds against *Pace* as might fairly be laid against drawing one white ball out of a bag of seven, one only of which is white; but backers of the horse consider that they ought to get the same odds as might be fairly laid against drawing the white ball when an additional black ball had been put into the bag. As respects *Green Sleeve* and *Blue Gown*, bettors are willing to lay the odds which there would be, respectively, against drawing a white ball out of a bag containing (1) eleven balls, one only of which is white, and (2) one hundred and seven balls, seven only of which are white. Now, the three horses *Rosicrucian*, *Green Sleeve*, and *Blue Gown* all belong to Sir Joseph Hawley, so that the odds about the three are referred to in the last statement of the list just given. And since none of the offers against the three horses have been taken, we may expect the odds actually taken about 'Sir Joseph Hawley's lot' to be more favourable than those obtained by summing up the three former in the manner we have already examined. It will be found that the resulting odds (offered) against Sir J. Hawley's lot—estimated in this way—should be, as nearly as possible, 132 to 80. We find, however,

* This article was written early in March.

that the odds taken are 180 to 80. Hence, we learn that the offers against some or all of the three horses are considerably short of what backers require; or else, that some person has been induced to offer far heavier odds against Sir J. Hawley's lot than are justified by the fair odds against his horses, severally.

We have heard it asked why a horse is said to be a favourite, though the odds may be against him. This is very easily explained. Let us take as an illustration the case of a race in which four horses are engaged to run. If all these horses had an equal chance of winning, it is very clear that the case would correspond to that of a bag containing four balls of different colours, since, in this case, we should have an equal chance of drawing a ball of any assigned colour. Now, the odds against drawing a particular ball would clearly be 3 to 1. This, then, should be the betting against each of the three horses. If any one of the horses has less odds offered against him, he is a *favourite*. There may be more than one of the four horses thus distinguished; and in that case, the horse against which the least odds are offered is the *first favourite*. Let us suppose there are two favourites, and that the odds against the leading favourite are 3 to 2, those against the other 2 to 1, and those against the best non-favourite 4 to 1; and let us compare the chances of the four horses. We have not named any odds against the fourth, because if the odds against all the horses but one are given, the just odds against that one are determinable, as we shall see immediately. The chance of the leading favourite corresponds to the chance of drawing a ball out of a bag in which are three black and two white balls, *five* in all; that of the next, to the chance of drawing a ball out of a bag in which are two black and one white ball, *three* in all; that of the third, to the chance of drawing a ball out of a bag in which are four black balls and one white one, *five* in all. We take, then, the least number containing both five and three, that is, *fifteen*; and then the number of white balls, corresponding to the chances of the three horses, are respectively six, five, and three, or fourteen in all; leaving only one to represent the chance of the fourth horse (against which the odds are therefore 14 to 1). Hence the chances of the four horses are respectively as the numbers *six, five, three, and one*.

We have spoken above of the published odds. The statements made in the daily papers commonly refer to wagers actually made, and therefore the uninitiated might suppose that every one who tried would be able to obtain the same odds. This is not the case. The wagers which are laid between practised betting-men afford very little indication of the prices which would be forced (so to speak) upon an inexperienced bettor. Book-makers—that is, men who make a series of bets upon several or all of the horses engaged in a race—naturally seek to give less favourable terms than the known chances of the different horses engaged would suffice to warrant. As they cannot offer such terms to the initiated, they offer them—and in general successfully—to the inexperienced.

It is often said that a man may so lay his wagers about a race as to make sure of gaining money whichever horse wins the race. This is not strictly the case. It is, of course, possible to make sure of winning, if the bettor can only get persons to lay or take the odds he requires to the amount he requires. But this is precisely the problem which would

remain insoluble if all bettors were equally experienced.

Suppose, for instance, that there are three horses engaged in a race with equal chances of success. It is readily shewn that the odds are 2 to 1 against each. But if a bettor can get a person to take even betting against the first horse (A), a second person to do the like about the second horse (B), and a third to do the like about the third horse (C), and if all these bets are made to the same amount—say L.1000—then, inasmuch as only one horse can win, the bettor loses L.1000 on that horse (say A), and gains the same sum on each of the two horses B and C. Thus, on the whole, he gains L.1000, the sum laid out against each horse.

If the layer of the odds had laid the true odds to the same amount on each horse, he would neither have gained nor lost. Suppose, for instance, that he laid L.1000 to L.500 against each horse, and A won; then he would have to pay L.1000 to the backer of A, and to receive L.500 from each of the backers of B and C. In like manner, a person who had backed each horse to the same extent would neither lose nor gain by the event. Nor would a backer or layer who had wagered different sums necessarily gain or lose by the race; they would gain or lose according to the event.

Let us next take the case of horses with unequal prospects of success—for instance, take the case of the four horses considered above, against which the odds were respectively 3 to 2, 2 to 1, 4 to 1, and 14 to 1. Here, suppose the same sum laid against each, and for convenience let this sum be L.84 (because 84 contains the numbers 3, 2, 4, and 14). The layer of the odds wagers L.84 to L.56 against the leading favourite, L.84 to L.42 against the second horse, L.84 to L.21 against the third, and L.84 to L.6 against the fourth. Whichever horse wins, the layer has to pay L.84; but if the favourite wins, he receives only L.42 on one horse, L.21 on another, and L.6 on the third—that is, L.69 in all, so that he loses L.15; if the second horse wins, he has to receive L.56, L.21, and L.6—or L.83 in all, so that he loses L.1; if the third horse wins, he receives L.56, L.42, and L.6—or L.104 in all, and thus gains L.20; and lastly, if the fourth horse wins, he has to receive L.56, L.42, and L.21—or L.119 in all; so that he gains L.35. He clearly risks much less than he has a chance (however small) of gaining. It is also clear that in all such cases the worst event for the layer of the odds is, that the favourite should win. Accordingly, as professional book-makers are nearly always layers of odds, one often finds the success of a favourite spoken of in the papers as a 'great blow for the book-makers,' while the success of a rank outsider will be described as 'a misfortune to backers.'

But there is another circumstance which tends to make the success of a favourite a blow to layers of the odds, and *vice versa*. In the case we have supposed, the money actually pending about the four horses (that is, the sum of the amounts laid for and against them) was L.140 as respects the favourite, L.126 as respects the second, L.105 as respects the third, and L.90 as respects the fourth. But, as a matter of fact, the amounts pending about the favourites bear always a much greater proportion than the above to the amounts pending about outsiders. It is easy to see the effect of this. Suppose, for instance, that instead of the sums L.84 to L.56, L.84 to L.42, L.84 to L.21, and L.84 to L.6, a book-maker had laid L.8400

to L.5600, L.840 to L.420, L.84 to L.21, and L.14 to L.1, respectively—then it will easily be seen that he would lose L.7958 by the success of the favourite; whereas he would gain L.4782 by the success of the second horse, L.5937 by that of the third, and L.6027 by that of the fourth. We have taken this as an extreme case; as a general rule, there is not so great a disparity as has been here assumed between the sums pending on favourites and outsiders.

Finally, it may be asked whether, in the case of horses having unequal chances, it is possible that wagers can be so proportioned (just odds being given and taken) that, as in the former case, a person backing, or laying against, all the four shall neither gain nor lose. It is so. All that is necessary is, that the sum actually pending about each horse shall be the same. Thus, in the preceding case, if the wagers L.9 to L.6, L.10 to L.5, L.12 to L.3, and L.14 to L.1, are either laid or taken by the same person, he will neither gain nor lose by the event, whatever it may be. And, therefore, if unfair odds are laid or taken about all the horses, in such a manner that the amounts pending on the several horses are equal (or nearly so), the unfair bettor must win by the result. Say, for instance, that instead of the above odds, he lays L.8 to L.6, L.9 to L.5, L.11 to L.3, and L.13 to L.1 against the four horses, respectively, it will be found that he must win L.1. Or if he takes the odds L.18 to L.11, L.20 to L.9, L.24 to L.5, and L.28 to L.1 (the just odds being L.18 to L.12, L.20 to L.10, L.24 to L.6, and L.28 to L.2, respectively), he will win L.1 by the race. So that, by giving or taking such odds to a sufficiently great amount, a bettor would be certain of pocketing a large sum, whatever the event of a given race might be.

In every instance, a man who bets on a race must risk his money, unless he can succeed in taking unfair advantages over those with whom he bets. Our readers will conceive how small must be the chance that an unpractised bettor will gain anything but dearly-bought experience by speculating on horse-races. We would recommend those who are tempted to hold another opinion, to follow the plan suggested by Thackeray in a similar case—to take a good look at professional and practised betting-men, and to decide 'which of those men they are most likely to get the better of' in turf transactions.

BLONDEL PARVA.

CHAPTER XXIII.—SHIPS AND SHIPS.

It is Saturday morning—between six and seven o'clock—and the weather is what sailors denominate 'dirty.' Not absolutely wet, but very likely to be so, with much wind, and yet much damp; altogether, by no means the sort of morning on which to enjoy a row on the Mersey. There is, however, a small boat upon its waters, carrying two passengers, one of whom at least gives the impression, by his air and manner, that he is there because he likes it. He is well wrapped up in costly raiment of seal-skin; he has an excellent cigar in his mouth; he produces again and again from his pocket—once every two minutes—a gold repeater, and consults it with exulting face.

'We are in plenty of time.'

'Plenty of time, Sir Richard,' answers his companion, a thickset, tall, grave man, who has no

weakness, absolutely none, except that 'he will have his joke.' He cultivates his gravity for the enhancement of his strokes of humour, and not at all because it is suitable to his serious and sober calling of inspector of police. When he has no repartee or epigram at hand (which happens oftener than he wishes), he repeats his words. 'Plenty of time—plenty of time.'

'Suppose he does not come at all, Mr Inspector? Eh?' asked the man in seal-skin. His tone was that of a man so secure of his object that he can afford to imagine obstacles.

'Then we have got an appetite for our breakfast; that is all: he must be either here or there. The house is watched.—Yonder is the *Ariadne*, boatman, is it not?'

'There she rides, sir—a fine ship as ever sailed. If you have taken passage in her— But there; gentlemen like you would go by steamer; though, for my part, give me the old heart of oak, not an iron box as is likely to bust up as not. However, that's only my notion. The wind is agin her, no doubt, to start with, and there's not many thinks with me, I know. They was telling me only yesterday that there wasn't a dozen passengers agoing by her.'

'Are they all on board, boatman, do you reckon?' inquired the inspector.

'Well, no,' rejoined the tawny oarsman. 'Shore-folks is always loath to start till they are obliged. But she will be off by eight, with the first of the tide.'

The *Ariadne's* deck was tolerably clear; as the boatman had said, there were but few passengers, and those, it seemed, had preferred to sleep on board, and had not yet risen. At all events, there was no sign of any very recent arrival; and there were none but sailors to be seen—a hive of busiest bees without one drone.

'Boat ahoy there! What is it?'

'We want to come on board.'

'It's too late. We can't have strangers now. We're off.'

'There's a passenger—a friend of mine—most important business,' ejaculated Sir Richard, in short sharp jerks, not very easy to catch in that driving wind. He was not accustomed, as the sea-captain was, to carry on a distant conversation through hollowed hands.

'Write by the next mail,' roared the captain, 'and be'— The latter part of the sentence was lost in the roar of the wind, the splash of the wave; but its meaning was complete without it.

'What are we to do?' asked Sir Richard hoarsely. 'I can't make myself understood in this cursed boat. By Heaven, we shall lose him.'

'Captain Barker,' exclaimed the inspector, in a voice of thunder, and without using his hands at all, 'I have a warrant to search your vessel. You see this staff. Deny me at your peril!'

'Why the Bay of Biscay' (let us say, though the captain referred to another locality) 'did you not say so? Who the king of Siam' (it was another potentate that was invoked) 'was to know you were thief-takers?—Come aboard.'

'I must see your passenger-list.'

'Here it is.'

'And your passengers.'

'Steward, shew these gentlemen thief-takers the cabins. They had better make haste if they don't want to take a longer voyage than they have

reckoned upon. There's nothing in this warrant to stop my sailing.'

The inspector and Sir Richard accordingly overhauled every cabin, fore and aft. Some passengers were in their berths; some half-dressed; some already in the saloons at breakfast. The gentlemen were neither sick nor ancient; the ladies were not men in disguise. No one answering to the description of Robert Irby was to be found.

'I see some empty cabins, captain,' observed the inspector when they came on deck again. 'Did you expect more passengers?'

'What the Bay of Biscay is that to you?'

'This warrant says you are to render me every assistance, in the Queen's name. I ask you, were any more passengers entered on your list than these?'

'Yes, one; but he is too ill to come on board, and has forfeited his passage-money.'

The inspector and Sir Richard exchanged glances.

'Sorry to have troubled you, captain,' observed the former civilly, as he turned to step into the boat.

'Go to the king of Siam!' returned the unappeasable captain.

Before the boat had got well away, the cadenced sounds were heard of the men at the capstan bars. The anchor was weighed; the huge sails began to fill: the *Ariadne* had commenced her long ocean-journey.

'It's just as well as it is, Sir Richard,' said the inspector, looking, not without curiosity, after this floating phenomenon, for his own business did not lie upon the deep waters. 'We have our man safe enough, since he is too ill to move. *Quæta non movetur*; I hope, by the by, he has not got his *quietus*.'

'Ah, suppose he was to die!' returned the baronet darkly. 'To die, look you! What should we do then?' And the speaker clenched his teeth.

'Well, Sir Richard, being a relative, you would doubtless go into mourning.' Never was joke let fall before a less appreciating audience. Mr Inspector saw his mistake, and hastened to repair damages. 'But he won't die, sir, not he,' added he assuringly. 'He knows a trick worth two of that.'

There was silence until the boat touched the landing-stairs.

'Shall we breakfast first, Sir Richard—this wind gives me an appetite—or go straight to the gentleman's lodgings?'

'To Elspeth Terrace at once!' responded the young man fiercely. He was hungry also, but with a hunger not to be assuaged by tea and toast.

They had not far to go. Elspeth Terrace was an unambitious row of lodging-houses, close to the water-side. To say truth, it was affected by a class of persons who appreciate facilities for immediate and lasting change of quarters. Such folks, as a rule, are long sitters, late risers, and not a blind of the upper windows had yet been raised throughout the long line of building, although it was near nine o'clock. Not even a housemaid was to be seen whitening a door-step, albeit it was Saturday, of all mornings in the week; and if that was not cleaning-day in the Terrace, it was plain by the look of the stones that they knew none. The place exhibited no sign of life save the presence of one seafaring man, sauntering up towards them with a pipe in his mouth, on the river-side of the street,

and occasionally contributing a mouthful of tobacco-juice to the Mersey.

'That's why the river is such a funny colour just about Liverpool,' observed the inspector, with humorous reference to this incident.—'All right, my man.'—'He has not good-manners, that fellow, but he can be trusted, Sir Richard.'

'Oh, I see; that is your watchman.'

'Yes. In case it should have been better for us not to be seen talking with him, we have a little code of signals. That contribution to the Mersey means, being interpreted: "All's well; nobody has left the house this morning." But there was no necessity, it seems, for such precaution.—Don't be excited, Sir Richard; don't put yourself out.'

For Sir Richard was very pale, gesticulating with his hands at some imaginary object, and muttering to himself: 'Yes, I will do it; yes, I will. It is absolutely necessary for my own safety—yes, *my own*, since he was the witness—to have him proved to be a felon.'

A gentleman of title (or indeed without one) may be an offensive sneak, and yet have scruples. Conscience is not so easily eradicated as some theologians would have us believe; even railway contractors and persons connected with the turf, by the mere virtue of their professions are not emancipated from its control. Complete freedom, as the poet truly remarks, is the slow result of time. At No. 10—that is, five doors off from the house whence Robert Irby was about to be transferred from a sick-bed to jail—Sir Richard stopped short, and broke into a profuse perspiration.

'Look here, sir,' remonstrated the inspector, with the air of a disciple of M. Comte, who has been through all the moral stages. 'I can see your little difficulty, and appreciate it. Those drops upon your forehead do you honour. I have been glad to catch hold of an area railing myself, when I was young at my trade. But just consider. This business is out of your hands, Sir Richard, and you can't stop it. If it was not for the mere matter of identification, you might be miles and miles away. It is the law that is taking its course—not you.—Now, don't ask me—pray, don't, sir—whether any sort of arrangement can possibly be entered into, for I know that's upon the tip of your tongue. I think no worse of you for thinking on it, but I durstn't do it for a thousand pounds; no, sir, nor for ten thousand.'

They walked on. The inspector thrust his hand into his coat-pocket, as though to make sure of the presence of some necessary article: it was there, and clattered against his fingers. He stepped up to No. 4, and lightly rang the bell.

A middle-aged woman, with a cross face, which she was wiping with her apron, answered his summons.

'You are the landlady of this house, my good lady, are you not?'

'Yes, sir, at your service.'

'You have lately had a sick gentleman for one of your lodgers, I believe?'

'Sick, yes; gentleman, no. I don't call him a gentleman,' returned the woman in high-pitched tones; 'and I only hope it will be made up to me for all the trouble I've had with him, and language such as I should be ashamed to give to a dog.' These remarks were directed not to the inspector, but point blank against the door of the sitting-room that opened from the lobby.

'And you have another lodger in the house, have you not, madam; one Mr Maurice Glyn?'

'Yes, sir; quite a different sort of body, I'm sure.—This way, gentlemen.' She opened the parlour-door, and in walked the inspector, with Sir Richard close behind him; while the seafaring man lounged on the opposite side of the way, with his back to the river.

Mr Maurice Glyn was still seated by the breakfast-table, but he had finished his morning meal, and was smoking his cigar. An open letter lay at his left hand; but he had done with that also, and was reading a Liverpool newspaper.

'To what am I indebted for this early visit?' inquired he, raising his eyebrows.—'Of Sir Richard Anstey, I already know much more than enough; but as for you, sir, I have not the pleasure of your acquaintance. I may add, if you persist in wearing your hat in a gentleman's private sitting-room, that I don't covet it.'

'I am an inspector of metropolitan police, sir, and my business is too urgent to admit of much courtesy,' returned the other, reddening.

'Does it also prevent your friend from closing the door?' inquired Maurice calmly. 'I am sitting in a thorough draught.'

'A view of the passage is indispensable, Mr Glyn. I have a warrant here for the apprehension of Robert Irby, at present, I believe, an inmate of this house. It is a very serious matter, let me tell you, this feigning of death to defraud insurance companies.'

Maurice rang the bell, which the landlady, who was in hiding round the doorway, answered with most unwonted promptness.

'Mrs Matthews, please to shew these gentlemen up-stairs. They are in search of some lodger of yours, it seems, of whom I have never heard.'

'Come, this is all nonsense, Mr Glyn,' exclaimed the inspector. 'It does not signify twopence about the name he is going under. You know very well whom we want; and—if he is ill—why, wouldn't it be better, sir, that you should break it to him, and not that?'

'Oh, I see,' interrupted Maurice; 'you're afraid of the shock. That is most considerate, I am sure.—But—Irby, Irby—is not Sir Richard there connected with the family? Why does not he go? If the poor wretch of whom you speak is the man I take him for, he is his own cousin—your own flesh and blood, Sir Richard. Mr Inspector, your friend shivers. I told you he was standing in a draught.'

'Which room is this Irby, or whatever you call him, lying in?' inquired the inspector of the landlady.

'La! sir, Mr Martin, for that was the name I knowed him by, he isn't here; thanks be to goodness! He went away on Thursday, and never was I more glad, I must say—although he was Mr Glyn's own friend—to see a lodger's back. A quart of brandy he took a day, sir, and it never did him no good, but always turned to bile and bad words.'

'Very good,' said the inspector smiling, 'and very natural, and does you a great deal of credit, ma'am; but we will just step up and see for ourselves, lest you should chance to be mistaken.'

'Mistaken!' echoed the landlady, following up the stairs. 'You mean that I'm a liar, nothing less. Why, I helped to dress him myself to go aboard.'

'Go aboard what?' inquired the inspector, making strict but fruitless search in every room.

'Why, the *Afrodeight*, to be sure, as started at six o'clock on Thursday, was luck to it: as though an hour or two could have made any difference when they was to be months on the way; putting folks to such an inconveniency as never was; and he a-cussing and a-swearin' to the very last, just because the cab was short for his legs.'

'So you are in search of my friend, Mr Martin, are you?' observed Maurice, as the two visitors—the inspector cool and unruffled as ever, but Sir Richard wearing a very ugly look—having thoroughly explored the little house, returned to the passage, where the parlour-door still stood open.

'If either of you wish to communicate with him, gentlemen, I know his address, and shall be happy to forward your letters: he sailed by the clipper-ship *Aphrodite* on Thursday last.'

'You have been aiding and abetting the escape of a Felon, sir—I suppose you are aware of that?' remarked the baronet, trembling with rage.

'If I have shocked your morality, Sir Richard Anstey, I must have sinned indeed,' rejoined Maurice sternly. 'Traitor and coward! you thought that you were warring with a woman—one indeed to whom you owed a brother's part, but whom you strove to drag to ruin—but you have met your match and more. Robert Martin started eight-and-forty hours ago for Australia. You should thank me, if you have one spark of honour left, for having saved you from the shameful deed you meditated.'

'Curse you, you dog!' cried Sir Richard; 'I will be even with you one day.'

'I hope so,' returned Maurice coolly; 'though at present you have had the advantage of me. There are three things I have set myself to do: first, to place this man in safety, between whom and his pursuers already lie five hundred miles of ocean. Secondly, to settle with your cousin's creditors'—Yes, this is her handwriting; I see you recognise it; I shall write to-day to tell her how Sir Richard and his blood-hound were foiled. And thirdly, I have to settle accounts with you.—You grin; but I will do it, sir, believe me. Yet, when the time comes, I will not be merciless. I owe you something for which I am grateful. You have introduced me, in your own proper person, to the most heartless and pernicious villain that ever lay—I think you will understand the allusion—beneath the foot of an honest man.'

Sir Richard did indeed wear a ghastly grin; he strove to speak, but hate and fury fairly choked his utterance.

'Come away, Sir Richard, and don't argue with him,' said the inspector, laying his huge hand upon the young man's arm; 'come away, I say,' added he in a whisper. 'I have hit upon a plan which may turn the tables yet.'

Whiter than the whitewashed wall, Sir Richard staggered out of the doors and across the street, where his companion was already in conversation with the seafaring man.

'George,' said he, 'be off at once to the shipping-office, and find whether an old man—an invalid—entered on the list as Mr Martin, sailed by the *Aphrodite* last Thursday, and bring the news to our hotel.—You see, Sir Richard, we must first make sure that yonder gentleman, and perhaps even the lady, have not been lying. It is a common vice; they do it even at sea, for that man Barker

lied to us about *his* sick passenger. When we have made certain so far, the question is, Sir Richard, what are you prepared to spend in the prosecution of this business?

'To catch this Irby? Anything! Thousands! But why speak of that, when all is lost, thanks to that meddling fool.'

'Nay, nay,' said the inspector reprovingly, who with the young man's arm within his own was already striding swiftly towards the town. 'Give the devil his due: it is the height of folly to under-rate our foes. Mr Glyn is no fool, but a very knowing card indeed—only just a little too exultant; it's excusable in so young a man, but it's an error. Now, if he had confined himself to saying: "The man you want sailed by the *Aphrodite* on Thursday," I think he would have done us; I really do. But he must needs say "clipper-ship:" that put the idea of comparative speed into my mind at once. Now, look you: the boatman told us that the wind was dead against the *Ariadne*; it has been in the same quarter ever since the *Aphrodite* sailed, bound for Australia likewise, so that she cannot have made much progress. Now, here's the riddle—it may cost you a thousand pounds or more, for what I know—but, "What goes faster than a clipper-ship, Sir Richard?"'

'By Heaven, a steamer!'

'Just so. Don't stop; there is not a moment to lose, and remember, a stern-chase is a long chase, and perhaps we may miss her after all. But this is our last chance. Are you prepared to charter a steamer?'

'Yes, I am,' cried Sir Richard; and if an oath is necessary to confirm an observation, that obligation was amply complied with.

CHAPTER XXIV.—MAURICE GLYN'S SECOND PATIENT.

Little dreaming of the new turn that affairs had taken, and not without many self-congratulatory chuckles over his baffled foes, Mr Maurice Glyn packed up his trunk, and took the express train for London. His plans had been as yet entirely successful. It had been his object all along to keep Sir Richard informed of his journey to Liverpool, and of Mr Martin's departure thence for the under world—only by no means to reveal the dates thereof. It was with the firm expectation of his letters being opened by other hands than those to which they were addressed that he had written to Kate and Mary upon the Thursday, appointing Saturday for the day of sailing by the *Ariadne*, whereas his man was already safely on board the *Aphrodite*. He had laid secret injunctions upon the gate-keeper's daughter to give the dealer in ecclesiastical brasses every possible opportunity of gleaning whatever information he (Maurice) should supply; but as soon as it was certain that his letters had been tampered with, he had the game in his own hands, and played with his antagonists as he pleased. He rightly judged that it was better not to inform Kate how matters stood: and her very natural anxiety and alarm, culminating in her earnest telegram, had worked together to blind the enemy and secure his own object.

One would have imagined since, according to his view, Kate's father was beyond pursuit, that there was now no further necessity upon Glyn's part for disguise or concealment; but this, to judge by his proceedings, seemed by no means to

be the case. As soon as the train reached its terminus, he hurried out of it, portmanteau in hand, and secured a cab: 'To Old Broad Street, City,' said he, in an imperious tone; 'and drive quick.' Then, as soon as he had cleared the corner of the street, 'To Pall Mall,' cried he: 'I have altered my mind.'

After getting some refreshment at his club, and leaving his luggage there, he went out. On the other side of the way, leaning against a lamp-post, was a man in a dreadnought coat, and wearing a 'sou'-wester.' Maurice walked across the street, and slapped this personage upon the back.

'Don't trouble yourself, my good fellow, to dog me, for nothing is now to be got by it. It is a saying of your own master's that a man should know when he was beat. Do you see?'

'I only do my duty, sir,' returned the man cheerfully, without the least attempt to deny the charge.

'Just so: your duty is your pleasure, is it? Well, if you follow me another step, I shall give you in charge to the police.'

Maurice hailed a passing Hansom, and drove off at a rapid pace: the spy remained looking after him, disconcerted and irresolute. The inspector had given him no orders to risk publicity. In that minute interval the link was lost: the object of his pursuit had dived into the roaring depths of London, and was for the present trackless.

'If that fellow had had time and opportunity to disguise himself—but there; I suppose he did not guess I had my eye upon him in Elspeth Terrace—what a devil of a mess we might have been in!' soliloquised Maurice in his ark of safety. 'It is plain that the suspicions of that prying bluebottle are not completely lulled. And yet—since he knows his man is on the road to Australia—why should he have sent that fellow after me? I feel like those interesting persons in Cooper's novels who are always being tracked by the crafty Mingoos, but, unlike them, I don't know how to conceal my trail. One had need to be a woodcock. Yes; I have all the necessity of the cuttle-fish for a modest seclusion, but without his natural gifts.'

Maurice had told the cabman to stop at Clapham Common, where he got out and walked. Upon that extensive prairie it was easy to see whether he was followed or not; and the result of his observations made him feel tolerably secure. A few minutes' sharp walking brought him to a small one-storied villa residence, very quiet and retired all the year round, except upon that great movable festival of the English Church which is called the Derby Day. Then Clapham, that city of the saints, becomes, as everybody knows, a moving spectacle.

After one anxious glance at an upper window, Maurice rang the bell. A decent widow woman, with that kind but weary face which more often consorts with widowhood than it is the fashion to credit, answered his summons.

'I am right glad to see you back again, sir. I was getting very anxious. The poor gentleman—'

'Well, what?'

'Well, sir—I don't like to be the bearer of bad news.'

'O yes, you do, my good lady,' said Maurice smiling. 'It is one of the few pleasures you have left to you in this world; but you enjoy it. You are one of the speculators for the fall.'

'Heaven bless you, sir, I never speculated in my life! What I always said to my poor dear husband was: "Be careful, John: we have but a little: let us keep it. If he had only listened to me!"'

'Yes, he was a Bull; you were a Bear.'

'Lor, Mr Glyn!'

'Never mind me.—Now, without exaggeration, is our friend up-stairs much worse?'

'Yes, sir, much. I've seen a deal of sick folks, and never one so bad as he—leastways, who got over it.'

'Is he quite sensible?—in his right mind?'

'To-day, he is, sir. But he has been very flighty. Of course, I don't mind, poor body; but he called the lassie "Katie," and that frightened her, and so I attend upon him myself now. O sir, I fear—from other things he said—the poor dear gentleman has got something on his mind. There's Mr Ebenezer Whiffles—a good man, sir—who would come at a moment's notice, if you thought it would be any comfort.'

'Not now, Mrs Gresham, thank you;' and Maurice pushed her gently on one side, for she was barring his progress.

'O sir,' answered she earnestly, 'don't say "Not now;" there is no time like the present.'

'You're a good soul, I do believe,' said Maurice, as he went noiselessly up-stairs. The door on the landing stood ajar, as the widow had left it—having perceived from the window Mr Glyn's approach—when she went to answer the bell. The little drawing-room had been turned into a bedroom, to accommodate not only the sick man, but his friend, who was wont to spend most of his time in the same apartment, at his desk.

'What news, Mr Glyn?'

Upon the scrupulously clean French bed, his head carefully propped up by pillows, and with a glass of some cooling liquid within reach of his hand, lay the gaunt form of the outcast and wanderer, Robert Irby.

'The very best of news, sir: I have seen you safely off to Australia.'

'Thank you, sir. I have no repayment to offer except that of ceasing to trouble you. You will soon see me start for a longer voyage than across the world, I hope.'

'You must keep up your spirits, Mr Irby; you kept them when things looked much blacker than they do now. The hounds are thrown off the scent, and you need have no apprehensions for your personal safety; or rather,' added he, as the sick man shook his head, with a grave smile, 'for those whom your capture would compromise. That is surely a great step gained.'

'Yes, indeed.'

'You should have seen your substitute—a gentleman with a great command of strong language, and a great capacity for strong drinks. I had no end of trouble with him; and really, when it came to the last, although Mr Jones had, I know, very excellent reasons for departure from his native land, I could hardly get him on board ship. How curious it was that I should have come across him!'

Maurice stammered and stopped.

'In the very place where you first met me, Mr Glyn? Not at all. We are wretches of the same class. You will find half-a-dozen such in any London Refuge for the Destitute, ready and willing to put the sea between them and all they know, for the price of their passage. O Heaven! if you

had seen what I have seen of this world's wretchedness—self-produced or otherwise, that is another question—if the parsons knew it, they would not be so puzzled as they are to picture hell.' The sick man spoke vehemently, but with painful effort; a fit of coughing seized him as he finished, and tore him like some evil spirit. It was frightful to behold.

'You must not talk, Mr Irby. You excite yourself too much.'

'You warn me wisely, Mr Glyn, not to waste speech. I am a hunted man, and scant of breath.'

'Well, well, the dogs are at fault, for the present, at all events.'

'Let us hope so, Mr Glyn; thanks to you; and if not, still thanks to you. It is time for me to tell you something—which may be much to you some day.'

'Not to-day, Mr Irby; you are too weak.'

'I shall be weaker to-morrow; nay, I may be dumb for ever. Listen to me. Has it never struck you that this Richard Anstey persecutes me with a malice greater than what is begotten of a rejected suit?'

'He is a devil,' cried Maurice, rising and pacing the room; 'and when my hands are free, let him look to himself.'

The sick man followed him with eager eyes and a grim smile. 'He is a devil: you are right there. But it is not solely because he would have married Kate, and cannot, that he seeks to drag her down to ruin through her father's shame: it is something more than revenge which prompts him.'

'What, then?'

'Fear. When I returned to Blondel, months ago, to see my darling—to take one look at Kate—I see you blame me for it; and I do not wonder: but, sir, there was once a man condemned for life to the Bastille, and buried in some pit beneath the ground, who counterfeited death, and lay for days without food, solely that they might take him out for one brief minute (believing him to be a corpse), and shew him the blessed sun. That was my case, sir; Kate was the sun to me; my own, my darling — And Susan, too, she was a good wife to me, and thought me honest. Pray, don't tell Susan, sir.' The sick man feebly turned his face to the wall and wept.

Maurice, deeply moved, kept solemn silence.

'When I returned to Blondel,' continued the sick man presently, 'I went to Joseph Grange's cottage for news of Susan—she that used to be my wife—and Kate. I did not know for certain whether my darling was alive or dead. From Joseph, a faithful friend, Mr Glyn—who recognised in me him whom none with eyes could see—I learned all: he told me of Kate's being wooed by Richard Anstey, and of his uncle's dangerous illness. Sir Nicholas and I had once been friends, but we had quarrelled. He had defrauded me of a large sum of money; and partly with the view of getting speech with him, and urging him to make me recompense through Kate, and partly to see Richard—the man they told me was to wed my darling—I went off the next morning to Anstey Court. I knew the place well, and managed to conceal myself close to the house. It was my intention to get within, and somehow to reach Sir Nicholas's room, but peering in at the window of a ground-floor chamber, I came face to face with the very man I sought. Death was written on his features even more plainly than you read it now

on mine; but I could see he recognised me, and fumbled for the bell-rope that lay beside him. Then I fled away and hid. But the same night I watched again at the open window, when Sir Nicholas and his nephew were alone, and I heard—

What's that?

'Nothing; only a cab driving by.'

'Close the door, and lock it. We must not be interrupted. I must finish now; I fear it may be too late an hour hence.'

Maurice obeyed him softly.

'That's well.—I heard Sir Nicholas beseech his nephew to see Katie righted; and I heard him promise that he would do so. Anstey had left her something in his will, but not enough.'

'Nay; there was no will,' said Maurice gently.

'There *was*—there *was*. I saw with my own eyes, Sir Richard—for he was Sir Richard then, although the breath was scarce out of his uncle's body—I saw him burn it.'

'Burn the will!' cried Maurice aghast.

'Ay, he burned it—I am not the only felon in the world—and while it was on the fire, he looked into the glass upon the mantel-piece, and saw the reflection of my face. Then I plunged into the laurels, and made my way out of the place at once.'

'But in that instant, did he recognise you?'

'I doubt it; but—perhaps Sir Nicholas had told him of what he had seen—he had certainly suspicions; they were verified, of course, when he saw me afterwards (stricken by this sickness, else I should have been far enough away) at Grange's cottage. He knows that it was I who was the witness of his fraud, and seeks to prove me felon, so that my testimony, should I venture to offer it, may go for nothing. You see now why I am a hunted man.'

'I do indeed. The villain! This news of yours at least warns us to expect no mercy; though, I fear, we can make no other use of it.'

'At present, none,' gasped the sick man. 'But when I am dead—not now—ask Joseph—Joseph Grange—the summer-house—he knows—the voice that had been growing feebler every moment, quavered and sank to nothing, though the lips still framed 'he knows—he knows.' But for that movement, so imperceptible was the flutter of the pulse, one would have thought the man was dead.'

TROUT-FISHING.

MANY are the trout-fishers, but few are they who can catch trouts. To wile a well-fed fellow out of a clear and skilfully fished stream of the Scottish Lowlands, during the months of summer, is by no means the simple business, requiring nothing but unlimited patience, which many suppose it to be. The truth of this dictum was fully experienced by my friend, Mr Alfred Jones of Manchester, in the month of August last. Mr Jones having taken a cottage on the banks of the Tweed, near Peebles, sallied forth one fine morning, fully accoutred for sport. He had provided himself with Mackintosh wading stockings, the leathern strap of his basket was brand-new, the brass mountings of his rod glittered gaily in the sun; and altogether Mr Jones's appearance was sportsmanlike and imposing.

The trout, however, proved to be in one of those inexplicable humours, which all fishers

know that they are occasionally liable to. They would not rise to-day. Mr Jones's temperament, however, was sanguine. Doubtless, there was thunder in the air, and there would be a splendid *take* to-morrow.

To-morrow came, and Alfred again sallied forth full of life and hope. The results of this day's fishing were so far superior to those of its predecessor, that at the end of seven hours Mr Jones had bagged a couple of remarkably fine minnows.

The day, however, Alfred feels certain, has been too bright. Equally certain did he feel that the next was too dull. Finally, he accounted for his continued want of success by coming to the conclusion that the river was too low, and that there was nothing to be done until a flood came. So the fishing-implements were meanwhile laid aside, and Mr Jones found himself with nothing to do but watch the clouds and tap the barometer all day. And suppose no rain and no flood to come—nothing but fine harvest weather for the next six weeks—what on earth is Mr Jones to do?

However, after much weary waiting, the rains descended, and the flood did come at last; but alas for human hopes; the net results of Mr Jones's day's fishing, under the new and apparently favourable auspices, were, this time, half-a-dozen of parr about the length of his middle-finger. 'It is plain,' he observed ruefully to himself as he wended his way homewards in weariness of soul—it is plain that the whole thing is a swindle—a thorough and complete swindle. To say that the cottage is damp, is but feebly to express the truth; it is wet, soaking wet; and if the rain goes on much longer, I believe that the ceilings will come down. It actually rained on my face when in bed this morning. Snails and earwigs seem to be naturalised in every room in the house.'

Here Mr Jones's attention was arrested by the sight of a fisher in the very act of playing a trout, and a pretty good trout too, to judge by the strong remonstrance which he was making. The fortunate angler was a small man with a somewhat ragged coat on. His sporting accoutrements were old and shabby. There was no glitter of brass or new leather about him. There was a smell of fish which diffused itself around him; not as of fish, caught to-day, or yesterday, or even last week, but the odour was as if his whole physique were impregnated with unspeakable fishiness.

He had landed his trout—a pounder—and was in the act of encreeeling him just as Mr Jones came up. Never in his life had Alfred seen such a display of trout as he saw in that old tattered basket. There would be about three dozen, weighing about sixteen pounds.

'Do you mean to say that you have killed all these this morning? Do you really say so? How in the world did you do it?'

'Aw fleed her up; than aw mennanted her doon.'

'Fleed her up! mennanted her doon!' Mr Jones marvelled what mystic process was here propounded for the catching of fish.

Interpreted for the benefit of Alfred and the reader, Mr Dickson—for this was the angler's name—meant to say that he had fished her, that is, the river, up with the fly and down with the minnow.

'And are they really taking just now?' Mr Jones inquired, almost breathless with amazement. 'Naw, they're no dayin' weel the noo,' was the

reply, whose truth was somewhat at variance with the fact that Mr Dickson was pulling trout out about as fast as he could throw his line.

Mr Jones now hopefully resumes business, and does, as he thinks, exactly as he sees Mr Dickson do. Again, however, strange to say, he is doomed to disappointment. By some perfectly incomprehensible law, the trout seem to be actually fighting with one another for the honour of being caught by Mr Dickson; while at the end of the day three small ones represent the whole of Mr Jones's booty. However, as the proverb says, small fish are better than none; and by some magic, when Alfred reaches Rosebank Cottage, the three little ones have actually grown into a basketful of beautiful trouts.

He has made an appointment with Dickson to go fishing next day, and he has returned home in a splendid humour.

'My dear, where did you get that mutton?' he asked Mrs Jones at dinner. 'Really, I think we are difficult to please if we can't get on with meat like that. It reminds me of what we used to get in Wales—very excellent mutton indeed.'

Now, in his own exhilaration of spirits, Mr Jones quite forgets that Mrs Jones has been sitting at home all day, not knowing what to do with herself. Except for culinary purposes, she does not feel the slightest interest in the trouts, and Alfred's ups and downs of spirits in connection with fishing seem to her to savour of idiocy. 'My dear,' she replies, with severe gravity, 'the mutton is exactly the same as we had yesterday, when you said that it was not fit for a Christian; that, I think, was your somewhat strong expression—not fit for a Christian to eat.'

'Ah, hum. Well, I suppose it must be the cooking.'

Mrs Jones makes no remark, but thinks a great deal. It was only yesterday that Alfred had denounced Jane's cooking as 'beastly.'

From this day, the practical results of Mr Jones's fishing-expeditions became totally changed. Trouts became a drug in the kitchen, and all the neighbouring families were supplied with them. Yet, somehow, the spirits of Mr Jones did not keep pace with his successes.

The fact must be told—though Mr Jones himself will never tell it to his dying day—that during his residence at Rosebank, Alfred had hardly succeeded in killing a single trout, except through the medium of his friend Mr Dickson, who had found his residence in the neighbourhood a profitable one. It had been to no purpose that Jones had changed rods with Dickson—that he had fished, now before him, and then behind him. Vainly had he 'fled her up,' vainly 'mennanted her doom.' The same result invariably followed: the man of skill filled his basket; while Jones was lucky when he caught two or three the length of his finger. He had watched and pondered, but there was no perceptible difference in the mode of operation, except that Dickson seemed to fish much more carelessly than he did. The thing was an inscrutable mystery; and Mr Jones returned to Manchester an unsuccessful angler, but so far a wiser man, that he had discovered that something else besides expensive tackle and unlimited patience were required to catch trouts on Tweedside.

Now, the general explanation of the mystery which has vexed the souls of countless Joneses who have gone to Scotland in the hope of catching

trouts, is this: The fish, though a greedy feeder, becomes, whenever he is in great request, singularly wary, and to catch him, there are innumerable petty details to be observed, the neglect of any one of which is fatal to the chance of sport. Again, to an onlooker, even of the keenest observation, there is no perceptible difference between the mode of operation of the man of skill and that of the bungler. In successful fishing, as in other successes, the difficulty is to get a start. You can only learn to be a good angler by closely observing the manoeuvring of trouts when feeding naturally, or when attacking your lure. But if you are a bungler, as all are at first, how are you ever to have an opportunity of so watching them, seeing that you will infallibly scare every fin within a hundred yards of you?

I would therefore recommend tyros not to begin in streams like Tweed and its tributaries, nor in any stream where there is a noted fisher in the neighbourhood; for there is nothing more remarkable than the rapidity with which trout learn that they have a human enemy to contend with. I have fished in streams and becks in the Highlands, and among the border hills, where even Mr Jones might have killed a basketful on the first day, so tame were the trout. Next day they were shier, and in a week they were as cunning as the denizens of Tweed or Teviot.

The cunning of trouts would appear to follow a law geographically the converse of that popularly supposed to prevail among men. It is when you get too far *south* that you find them difficult to cheat. An Aberdonian trout is a greenhorn compared to a Roxburghshire one. Go far north, therefore, I would say to the beginner. But even far north, trouts are by no means just to be caught by every one, as a friend of mine, a learned professor, had last year reason to discover. I met my friend, whom I had not seen for a long time, one evening during a pleasant month which I was spending at Ballater, and we arranged a fishing-expedition next day up Glen Muick. The professor, with characteristic intellectual energy, had been reading up the subject of angling, and in the course of his studies he had elaborated many theories respecting the capture of trout; and next day he plainly purposed to let another friend and myself see what a philosopher—deep in natural history and anatomy—could do when he condescended in an idle moment to unbend his intellect in a popular pursuit.

There was, however, one point in the structure of trouts to which he had not paid due attention, and in an anatomist the oversight was quite unpardonable: I refer to the structure of the eye. After a separation of some hours, during which I had done fairly enough, I came up with my learned brother-angler still pursuing his vocation, and I must say with laudable perseverance, considering that he had not encreased a single fin. When I add that he was six feet high, that he had been for half an hour standing on the same spot on a rock as high as himself, that he was fishing in a stream about fifteen feet broad, that he could not throw a line longer than himself, and that far from precisely, the result will not be surprising to the practical angler, though I have reason to believe that it was highly so to the philosopher.

My learned friend was overlooking the grand fundamental law of angling, which is to avoid being seen by the fish. Though how to do this,

without giving up other important points in the pursuit, can only be arrived at by practice, there are three rules I can give, a strict attention to which will be sufficient to start the beginner. Fish up-stream, in clear water at least. Never stand on a bank, or even on a stone, an inch above the level of the water. Throw as long a line as you can, consistently with neatness and precision.

The last rule is the least important, as in rough and broken water, quite a short line will often do. Pools and still water none but skilful hands need try. With regard to the second rule, even if there is a portion of the stream which you require to miss, do not walk along the banks; for if you frighten so much as one trout, you cannot tell how far he will run up, infecting all the others with his fear. The extent of the evil the skilful eye can tell by the character of the water. Where rough and broken, the harm is often not very great; but in long smooth stretches, to scare a single trout is often fatal.

In large rivers, where you can, with rod and line, reach thirty or forty feet straight out from you, such extreme caution may be dispensed with. Fineness of gut—important at all times—then becomes indispensable. The beginner, however, I repeat, cannot be too careful in the observance of the three rules which I have given; for if he were cunning as Mr Dickson himself in every other respect, if he allows the trout to see him—and its eyesight is wonderful—all his skill would be exerted in vain.

The art of throwing a long and light line can only be acquired by practice. The only rule I can give is, to let it go its full length out behind you before you switch it forward; and of course study the wind. This grand fundamental point of skill being reached—namely, eluding the eyesight of the trout, who all lie with their heads up the stream, the next question the learner should ask of his instructor is, on what spot of the water shall I allow my line to light? A want of the knowledge involved in the answer to this query was principally the cause of Mr Jones's failure. It is only to be arrived at inch by inch, and only to be fully mastered by years of practice and observation. The lure must light true to an inch. Beginners fancy that trout are scattered in a random way over the water, and that they are just as likely to encounter a trout in one place as in another. There is perhaps a prejudice in favour of deep pools, which are generally the most difficult place in which to kill trouts, from the quantity of line which you must expose in order to reach them. The strongest trout of the neighbourhood selects the best spot for feeding, and so soon grows bigger and stronger still, while his poorer neighbours are struggling for the means of bare existence. Just as a rich man in this world, by strength of funds, tends to grow richer, while the poor remain poor. Now the question is, how to discover the spot which the potentate will have chosen. He will have had an eye to the likeliest bit for securing flies and worms as they come down the stream, or drop off trees and bushes. He will have also given careful consideration for his bodily ease; not liking, generally speaking, to be bored by a strong current. But I could give the reader more insight into this question in an hour at the river's side, than by any amount of writing. The still water at the neck of what fishers in Scotland call the 'stream'—that is, the

rough rapid water as distinguished from the still, or pools—is a favourite haunt. In summer, when the trout are feeding, the edges of pools are favourite resorts. There the trouts are often lying in hundreds, digging with their snouts into the banks for worms.

While there are certain casts that are nearly always good, the general feeding-ground varies with weather and season; hence the great difficulty of arriving at a thorough comprehension of this most important point. How important, any one may understand when told that, when really feeding, the trout almost all fly to the same character of water, and while the skilled angler is pulling them out at every cast, the unskilled one is employed in vainly thrashing water devoid of a single fin. The meal being finished, or the shower of flies which induced it having left the water, the trout then return to the deeps to ruminate and digest, and while this process is going on, he will be a cunning angler indeed who will induce them to take his lure. In warm weather in summer, when the trout begin to feed, they all leave the deep, and come into the shallowest water—often into water so shallow that it hardly covers the backs of the large ones. The reason of their doing this is, that the summer flies hover near the surface of the river, but seldom fall on to it, as they do in spring, when they are weaker; so that to catch them by a leap, the trout must lie near them. At no time are good trout so little shy or so greedy as when they are lying in water so shallow that none but the skilful angler ever thinks of throwing a line into it.

The next point to which I will advert is precision of aim. Suppose you know, as the cunning angler does, almost to half an inch where the maw of his destined victim is placed during his feeding-time, and that you understand how to elude his watchful eye, there is still something else to be done before you are successful in a well-fished river. If your lure falls lightly, and consequently naturally, within an inch or so of the trout, his instinct will lead him instantly to snap at it. If the lure be a bait, he will proceed to gorge after catching it, provided he does not feel the line tighten, or see you, when he will instantly let go his hold, if he can. An artificial fly, however, he will reject the instant he touches it; hence the importance of quick, natural, and well-trained eyesight in this branch of trout-angling, to enable you to strike the instant he touches the hook; that is, before you have felt anything. If your first intimation of the trout's attack in fly-fishing comes from your sense of touch, as is the case with ninety-nine anglers out of a hundred, you need not strike at all—he has either hooked himself, or else he is gone.

Suppose, however, that you bungle your cast, and the lure falls five or six inches from the trout, he will then most likely make a dart at it, but the odds are a hundred to one that he will become suspicious, and turn tail before reaching it. He will have had time to take stock of the line, the shadow of the rod, and very likely of yourself. I have, hundreds of times, on making a false throw, seen the trout dart from his lair, with the view of seizing the lure, then catch sight of the line, and wheel back quick as lightning to his hiding-place. In fishing-pools, where the trout are digging in the banks for worms, the most absolute precision of throw is requisite; because the water being still, and probably six or eight inches deep about the

edge—if deeper than this you will do nothing—the line will certainly be seen, and if you give the trout a second for reflection, he will infallibly say: ‘No, thank you,’ to your proffered morsel. When streams are low and clear, there is nothing more important than fine tackle. The finest *roundest* gut that can be got ought to be used; and the joinings should be firmly and neatly knotted. Never use loops—a loop is an abomination in the eyes of a well-fed lowland trout. It is undoubtedly curious that when a trout will confidently seize a minnow or a worm with two or three hooks sticking through it, the sight of a bit of coarse or flat gut will terrify him out of his wits; or, to speak more correctly perhaps, will terrify him into them. It is certainly true, however, that line and not hooks is what he dreads. For this and for another reason, the less line you throw into the water the better. The other reason is that, as a general rule, the less line you have in the water, the more natural will be the movement of your lure. Suppose the stream, at the spot where it alights, to be running at three miles an hour, and that the upper part of your line falls where it is running at six miles an hour, it is plain that your hook will be dragged down in an unnatural, and therefore suspicious manner.

In attempting, in this general way, to throw light upon the mystery which so puzzled my friend Mr Jones, and sent him back to Manchester with despondent views of his own intellect, I do not intend to discuss the respective merits of the various lures ordinarily used in the south of Scotland for the taking of trout. The artificial fly is undoubtedly the cleanest and the neatest, and the really first-rate fly-fisher has unquestionably reached the acme of his art. But equally certain is it that with worm or minnow, you will kill the largest and finest trout; and the angler who, on a bright day in June, in a clear and well-fished river, can fill his basket with speckled beauties by dint of worm or minnow, has some reason to be proud of his skill. As to killing a basket of trout, now and then, with artificial fly or with worm, in spring or autumn, in muddy water, or in mountain streams in out-of-the-way districts, this is what Mr Jones himself might have done even previous to his acquaintance with Mr Dickson. But the man who, under the difficult conditions which I have stated, can fill his creel from Tweed or Clyde by any legitimate lure, has most likely in him stuff that would enable him to do some other things besides. A rod and a line, with a worm at one end and a fool at the other, will hardly fill a creel between the Solway and the Grampians; nor south of the Solway either, I suspect.

The really first-rate Scottish angler is, I take it, made of some such stuff as the following: His eyesight must be naturally good, and trained to the perfection of that of a wild Indian. This is necessary both for the reason given above in connection with fly-fishing, and for general observation of the habits of the trout. Then the angler's mental powers of observation must be of the highest order. He must be a profound inductive reasoner, fertile in invention, patient in experiment, unconquerable in hope—above all, perfect in self-control. The really and truly great man lands his fish or loses him without a muscle of his face betraying the deep emotions of his soul. The man who can lose his ‘fish’—a term only applied to a thumper—after an exciting run, and

immediately resume business as if nothing had happened, might have been a Duke of Wellington, had fate given him the chance.

ACROSS A CONTINENT.

WE English folk learn Latin and Greek, and (some of us) a little mathematics; but there are not many among us, beside those who write F.G.S. after their names, who know much about geography. Information concerning out-of-the-way places is only imparted to us at immense cost; the Russian war revealed to us the Crimea; and we shall now have to pay five millions of money for a few details respecting Abyssinia.

In strange contrast to the general ignorance is the style in which our travelled fellow-countrymen are accustomed to address us on their return from some obscure and distant portion of the earth's surface. We are supposed to know all about it—its extent; its population; its history, past and present; and to sympathise with the local enthusiasm of the author upon pain of his supreme contempt. We do what we can, we stay-at-home readers, to meet his views; we are often amused or enlightened by him and his book; but the fact is, as for the place he makes such a potter about, *we don't know where it is* when all is done. A book of travel in Central America, for instance, should no more be published without a map, than a volume of double acrostics without an appendix of answers.

This omission is one of the few objections we have to make against Mr Boyle's very interesting *Ride Across a Continent*;* a *Personal Narrative of Wanderings through Nicaragua and Costa Rica*. ‘Where is Nicaragua?’ is the question that many a reader will ask himself when he gets thus far. And it is absolutely necessary that this should be answered, if any clear idea is to be entertained of the matter in hand. For Mr Boyle's object in going so far, and faring so badly, is this, and this only—first, ‘to examine the antiquities of Nicaragua’ [the antiquities, my good sir; so that you can't defend your ignorance upon the ground that it is a new place]; and secondly, ‘to solve the Rio Frio mystery’ [of which, we will stake our existence, this is your first time of hearing].

Nicaragua and the other locality, then, are republics lying to the north of the Isthmus of Panama; and the port at which Mr Boyle landed is called San Juan. In our Atlas there is a port of this name on both sides of the continent, which, supposing anybody but Mr Boyle should want to go there, might be a source of considerable embarrassment and mistake, involving a sea-voyage of some months; but it seems certain that our traveller landed on the right hand—or, to speak more geographically, upon the Atlantic—side. It is an excellent harbour, when you get there; but there is only a few feet of water, though a great deal of surf, upon the bar, so that even the mail-bags are generally landed dripping.

This San Juan (or Greytown, as our author most commonly terms it) is a little place, but it is not always without visitors. ‘If eight

* *A Ride Across a Continent*. By Frederick Boyle Bentley.

hundred travellers descend upon a village of seven hundred inhabitants, and stay there ten days, what will be the awful result? Not eight hundred virtuous artisans, each provided with a paper of sandwiches, and a bottle of beer in a side-pocket, but eight hundred wild Californians, all nuggets and bowie-knives, each one of whom is bound to have three meals a day, and liquor whenever he pleases? "Three days ago, sir," said our author's landlady, "we had eight hundred Californians here on the Transit, and they stayed ten days. We had fifty of them in this house." Fifty of them in the *Union Hotel*! Fifty elephants in a loose box! This building, in which we took up our quarters, was twenty feet in breadth by seventy feet in length, inclusive of a verandah and back-kitchen. It was built of wood, as are all the houses of Greytown; upon the ground-floor was a bare flagged bar, a bare flagged dining-room, and a kitchen barer than either. On the upper floor were sixteen bedrooms, all of them more than six feet square. Leaving our baggage to be carried up, we strolled across a wet meadow to this hotel, and entered the bar; the landlord made his appearance, and introduced himself as Captain Fletcher. On his retirement to arrange our rooms, a gentleman with a weather-beaten face and a thick moustache approached us, and said, with much cordiality: "Haow a'y you, gentlemen?" Then, after a moment's thought, he added triumphantly: "Naow you've come by the steamer"—as if he himself were in the habit of travelling by balloon. Having long since determined to conform in every respect to the native habits, we replied mildly that we had come by the steamer, and spat against a pillar, to shew we were acquainted with American manners. This action seemed to strike our inquiring friend. He looked hard at the three lonely cocoa-palms upon the sandspit, glanced at us from the corner of his eye, and after a pause observed: "Kind o' dry this, ain't it?" In innocence, we objected that the scene appeared to us rather damp. "Yes," he said; "natur's damp here, but humans air always dry. Say! shall we take a drink?" Following the usages of the country, we took a drink, and the landlord and his barman kindly joined. Our hospitable acquaintance was then introduced as Captain Somebody, and the barman confided to me his own name, which was Joe.

Everybody is a captain in Greytown, and everybody who arrives there, which included on this occasion Mr Boyle, Mr Jebb, Mr J. D——, secretary, and Ellis, an English groom—all captains upon Nicaragua soil. The question of the antiquities was not one to excite much sympathy among the Greytown public; but the Rio Frio matter, the history of which is as follows, was—

"The broad San Juan river, which now, subject to protest, forms the boundary between Nicaragua and Costa Rica, has three large tributaries—the Serebiqui, the San Carlos, and the Rio Frio. So far as any one has had courage to explore this last-named river, it is a slow, deep stream, much blocked with fallen timber, but in other respects suited for navigation. Where its waters rise, their course, and the dangers of the stream, are points utterly unknown. One fact alone is sure about the Frio—that its head-waters are the favourite haunt or habitation of the Guatusos.

'Everything connected with that fierce race is enveloped in awful mystery; but it is curious that all accounts agree in giving them an origin far

from their present seats. The story current in Costa Rica cannot fail to interest the Englishman, even if he be not converted to a belief in its truth. When Sir Francis Drake retired to the Pacific shore, after the sack of Esparsa, say they, a large body of his men mutinied, in mad hopes of holding that town against the Creole forces, and resting peaceably there. Drake left them to their fate. But when the Spanish army assembled, and the mutineers found themselves nearly surrounded, they hastily retired through the forests of the Merivalles, with the intention of cutting their way to the friendly Mosquito shore. Unquestionably, this route would lead through the country of the modern Guatusos, who were then called "Pranzos." It is certain that the bucaniers never crossed the San Juan, and equally certain that the Spaniards never fell in with them: many believe that, wearied out with hardships, they settled round the head-waters of the Frio, destroying the male population, and taking the women to wife. The universal legend of the surrounding peoples—Indians, Caribs, Nicaraguans, and Costa Ricans—declares the Guatuso race to be distinguished by fair hair and blue eyes. It is not a little curious that in the various fights and defeats of invading expeditions, an Indian has scarcely ever been seen by any reliable witness; the arrow whizzes from the hand of an unseen archer, the celt strikes silently from behind.' A certain English minister, forgetful of chronology, but who had heard of the supposed English origin of the Guatusos, strongly recommended that Mr Boyle and his exploring friends should carry a Union-jack displayed in their van!

This Rio Frio matter is much discussed at Greytown, but the adventurers do not succeed in getting anybody to join them except 'Sammy, a white Creole boy from Jamaica,' who was probably actuated by other motives than the spirit of discovery. They accompany a surveying party up the Colorado for three days, and a very nice party it was; its members—the very pick of the Western States, says Mr Boyle, and filibusters to a man. 'That nineteen out of twenty Americans on board would have shot a man with just the same indifference as I should feel in shooting a monkey, is probably true enough—the greater part had long since *fait leur épreuves* in that respect—but bad temper was never met with among these wild fellows. There is nothing like carrying arms (they had every one of them revolvers) to teach a people courtesy and good temper.' It is curious to see how a man of intelligence, great (nay, even poetic) power of description, and keen sense of humour, can stick to his own fanciful opinions at the same time that he is actually illustrating their baseless character. Within a few pages of this eulogy upon the practice of carrying arms, we come upon this statement: 'To illustrate the incredible recklessness of life so characteristic of the filibuster class, I may mention an anecdote of Mr S——, for which we can vouch. Lying in his hammock on the hurricane-deck, S—— was much pestered by the invitations of a Californian friend to go to the bar; invitations he was too lazy to accept. The Californian became very angry, and, drawing his revolver, threatened to shoot unless his filibuster friend would come. This was no idle threat, as all knew, but S—— composedly observed: "Shoot away! You're too tight to hit a haystack if the wind were high." The Californian fired two shots

quick as thought, and not till then did S— slowly cock his revolver, drawing: "That's enough, I guess. If you pull again, I'll shoot!" And we may add, as a corroboration of this anecdote, that throughout the very interesting and exciting scenes narrated in Mr Boyle's two volumes there is scarcely one male actor (with the exception of course of his own party) on whom, whether foreigner or native, the imputation of homicide or habitual intoxication does not rest. At the same time, it must be confessed, according to our author's representation, which we are bound to believe, that among the fillibusters, there is a sense of the beauties of nature, which we certainly do not find in similar reckless and combative natures at home. Speaking of clearings in the Colorado, for instance, Mr Boyle's own graphic description is matched, in feeling at least, by a remark of one of his 'six-shooter' carrying friends.* 'Living jewels flashed about the displaced wood; lovely little frogs, that seemed made of scarlet sealing-wax, scrambled about our feet, and looked up with eyes of emerald and topaz; big iguanas, with coats of shining green, scuffled over the grass, carrying their long tails high up above their backs; flies of sapphire, with ruby wings, hung quivering in the sunbeams that pierced the tangled foliage. When the pale evening mists began to climb the steamer's sides, the last logs were thrown on board, and we rejoined our party. "Kind o' pretty it were, that clearin'. Made one's eyes feel good, ye know—the timber, and the sundown, and all! Will yer jine us? This is genuine Bourbon [whisky]!"'

Failing, at present, to explore the Guatuso country, our adventurers take passage to Granada, on the north-west shore of Lake Nicaragua; the waterway to this town is up the San Juan by steamer, and, of course, when they arrive at the point where the Frio joins it, our author takes boat and visits the mouth of that mysterious stream, the last expedition to explore whose recesses resulted in the death (by arrow-heads) of forty-three Nicaraguan soldiers out of the fifty of which the party was composed. 'Pushing on over the dusky waters, we came to a line of trees something like mangrove, and then to a very garden of convolvulus. Nothing could be seen but broad green leaves and garlands of varied blossom, white and flesh tint, and scarlet and pink, and loveliest of all, deep blue. Others there were fantastically streaked and mottled, and in the midst of the garden, which covered an acre, stood a bush one mass of golden blossom. Further on, we entered heavier forest. Here and there, a tall tree leaned across the stream, trailing its long beards of moss in the sluggish current. Another was spangled over with the crimson and yellow flowers of lianas; and another was twisted into a spiral column by the strain and pressure of the climber. On every bough an iguana sat, warming his motley scales and serrated crest in the hot sun; while, with green and glistening eyes, he stealthily watched our movements. Flocks of parrots passed overhead in that fluttering flight so peculiar to their

kind, every pair keeping faithfully by itself, and breathlessly sympathising in musical croak. Big fish-hawks hung motionless in the sky, asleep on quivering wings; rows of uncouth needle-ducks were perched on every rotting snag, stupidly stretching their long wings as if for instant flight. With a sudden swirl and splash the great head of an alligator shot up above the surface, casting high into the air a fish, which he caught as it fell with a clash like the shutting of monstrous shears; then sinking down again so gently, so swiftly, so noiselessly, that he seemed rather to melt into the water.'

It is curious, that although Mr Boyle has absolutely no prejudices, except against all the blessings of civilisation, he has whimsical objection to ending that 'pointless farce,' as he somewhat dismally terms his natural life, in the jaws of an alligator. He apologetically owns to feeling a particular disgust in the idea of his flesh going 'to swell and fatten that hideous, ill-proportioned, puncheon-like mass of deformity called an alligator,' whereas he has no horror in conceiving the same materials helping to 'round a tiger's muscles, or to sleek a great boa.' Once on a time, he had a personal interview with an alligator, which left an unfavourable impression of the whole genus. 'I saw such a monster walking from one pool to another. The drought had shallowed up his favourite haunt, and he was wandering down the channel in search of water. With a lumbering roll of his body, caked and cracked with dry mud, with a silent waving of the crested tail, the monstrous reptile wriggled swiftly on. A clumsy leap on his fore-legs revealed the muddy pleasure of his soul; his hideous head rolled from side to side with each movement of the limbs. I think one never could behold a sight more sickening, and more terrible at the same time, than the creeping progress of this gray and colourless monster. His path was the shady channel of a mountain-stream, hung over with wreaths of delicate foliage. Long since the water had dried up, and its bed was a garden of reeds, and lilies, and feathery young bamboo. He burst through those tender webs with hideous swiftness, crushing down fairy palaces of fern in his clumsy rolling crawl. We stood close to a boulder, about three feet high, which stood in this track; and though his quick eyes must have warned him we were near, there was no escape, and he went right on bravely. A turn aside would have cleared the rock, but straight he went at it. His tail flapped sharply on the stones as he sprang strongly upwards, and rested his iron chin upon a ledge. Then a mighty claw was spread out; and then the fearful eyes, which always seem so like death, peered up above the stone. With a stillness of conscious power, the pillar-like arms were stretched forth clutchingly; then the jagged ridge of the back slowly arched itself above the shoulders, while the shapeless, uncoloured head was pressed down upon the rock, and the eyes stared into ours.'

Mr Boyle describes brutes and reptiles as graphically as the beautiful spots which their presence makes loathsome or fatal to man. There is the black and brown 'tuboba,' the terror of Central America, with his glassy eyes, and satin coils, and throat swelled with rage and venom: there is the 'corale,' most delicate and beautiful of snakes, looking 'like a gleaming necklace,' its slender body encircled with alternate bands of black, white, and scarlet, the last being raised just as are

* The reason of these appreciative fillibusters haunting this Paradise—for, indeed, in beautiful Nicaragua, 'all, all save the spirit of man, is divine'—is because there is a Transit route from Greytown to San Francisco, namely, from New York by sea to Greytown; then by the river San Juan and the Lake of Nicaragua to Virgin Bay; whence twelve miles by land to San Juan del Sur; and thence by the Pacific to San Francisco.

the scarlet spots of a trout in the high season; and worst of all, there is the 'colebra de sangre,' the blood-snake, most deadly, and fortunately, rarest of reptiles, which owes its ghastly name partly to the uniform crimson of its scales, partly to the horrible effects of its bite, which in ten minutes produces a sweat of blood. Half an hour of life is the longest time which experienced doctors will allow to a strong man bitten by the 'sangre.' Lizards, too, elsewhere commonly so harmless, are in Nicaragua dread reptiles indeed. At the sight of a pair of 'dull stupid' ones, even the fillibusters fled in dismay, declaring that a mere touch with a booted foot would cause a horrible death; and Science, in the person of Dr Flint of Granada, fully justified their fears. The first case (of deadly lizard) which was brought 'under his notice was that of a man found dead one morning, with the complete impress of a lizard's body burned into his back. A further search shewed the body of the reptile, also dead; probably smothered by the weight of the man lying on it. The second case was that of a healthy young woman, who put her foot—hardened, by long habit of walking barefoot, into the consistency of leather—upon one of these reptiles in the woods. Though Dr Flint used every remedy he could devise, she finally died in great agony.'

Some of the insects even—the great spiders with basilisk eyes, which darted about in a strange zigzag course; the hairy beetles and flat cockroaches, which, unbothered by our approach, took to their wings and flew; the flat soppy insects [ugh!], of hideously uncertain shape, which rolled about under foot; the shiny black crickets, with long inquisitive horns, which leaped up into the air, and struck us in the face—even some of these were not only disgusting but harmful, at all events to the brute creation. The ugly hairy spider of Chontales, 'covered with rough spikes of a dun colour, and his jaws armed with most awful nippers,' is (although only four inches across) the terror of all mules. It seizes the sinew of a fetlock in its horrid jaws, and straightway the leg swells, and the hoof must needs rot off and grow again—a process of twelve months—before the poor beast can put foot to ground again.

Yet, the reptiles of Nicaragua, choice as they are, do not present more attractions to the natural history *savant* than do its mountains to the Alpine Climber. Some of these, such as Mombacho, the volcano, although under six thousand feet, seem absolutely inaccessible. The forest through which the adventurers had to make their way, to begin with, was so dense that 'the sky was not once seen during two hours' ascent, and in most places even the upper branches of the trees were hidden.' They endeavour to take advantage of the bed of a torrent, but the precipices close them in so completely, and the channel as it narrows becomes so deep, that they have to lasso a big tree to release themselves from their position, and supplement their lasso with knives, to cut for themselves foothold. After eleven hours of travelling, this deep ravine, 'deeper now than ever,' still intervenes between them and the object of their aspirations, the peak of Mombacho. To go further that night was impossible, and to expose Mr D—, already ill with over-exertion, to the heavy mountain dews, most perilous; also the Indians refused to fetch water. 'Not for one thousand dollars, señor, paid now on

this spot.' There is nothing for it but to return; the whole party are so worn out that they can scarcely move their limbs. Mr D— thinks he made the descent 'upon his head;' and scarcely any one knew how he got down.

No help in anything is to be found in the Nicaraguans themselves. An idle, sottish, stupid lot of people, not even possessing the savage virtue of hospitality.

Among other interesting particulars concerning this hateful nation, with which Mr Boyle favours us, is some curious political information. They are said to be devoted to a republican form of government, but what they like is Revolution. 'During the brief period of the independent existence of the nominal republic of Central America (between 1823 and 1838), a country inferior in extent to any other of the provinces of America once belonging to Spain, and only containing about two millions of inhabitants, no fewer than three hundred and ninety-six persons have exercised the supreme power of the republic and the different states.' This excessive political activity, which is of course the ruin of commerce and prosperity of all kinds, Mr Boyle attributes to a very singular cause—the inordinate use of hammocks. 'I really believe it is the hammock which has pulled down the active old Spanish spirit to its present stagnation. The national ensign of Nicaragua should be a hammock waving over a graveyard; for the people are dead, and their ghosts loiter all day in the murderous net. You enter a house—there is the owner swinging in his hammock, undressed, unwashed, not reading, not working, not thinking. There he lies, with his children beside him, backwards and forwards gently swaying in a half-doze. Between his lips is the paper cigarette, near his hand is the jug of lemonade, but in his head there is not an idea, whether of virtue or vice. As you enter the open doorway, he looks up languidly, motions you to a parallel hammock, offers you a light for your own cigarette—if you have not one he has none either—and there you may lie and swing so long as you may please. It is not necessary to make a remark during your visit; you are at liberty to do so, but the answer is so drowsy, so softly impregnated with hammock, that conversation is not encouraged. Nicaragua lies in its hammock all day, and sleeps therein at night. When the general should be at the head of his troops, he is dozing in a gorgeous hammock of dyed grass; when the army should answer the call of the general, the army is swinging softly in its ragged hammock of twine. The merchant has a hammock in his counting-house; in the absence of customers, he lies therein. The priest performs his parish duties, suspended like Mohammed between heaven and earth; he longs for a dispensation to get through mass in a similar position. The doctor receives his patients, the lawyer his clients, the lady her lover, the deputy his constituents, the constituents their deputy, all lying in the devoted hammock. From his hammock the host greets his guests, the minister harangues the deputation, the general addresses his army, and the president consults his cabinet. To the hammock flies the lover in search of consolation; the disappointed candidate, the henpecked husband, the ruined storekeeper, all find their solace in the tender swing. Fields are cultivated in it, battles are won, books are written, reforms are introduced, education is spread, everything is changed, and Nicaragua takes a foremost place in

the world's civilisation. But when the well-meaning visionary leaps out to carry through these dreams, his back bends, his head swims, he sinks into his hammock and dreams again.

It is perhaps partly due to the contempt with which the present Nicaraguans (or 'Greasers') naturally enough inspired our author, that he entertains so high a respect for the memory of the Indians who inhabited the place before the Spanish conquest. Except that they lived a long time ago—which is reason enough, by the by, to excite the veneration of many good people—and built tombs, which, though large, are not so big as the Pyramids, we do not ourselves see much reason for this posthumous regard. But Mr Boyle, who (we are sure will not be displeased at our remarking) scoffs at most things we in England hold sacred or ennobling, keeps a reserve of reverence for these old-world stocks and stones, provided only they have the halo of idolatry about them. Superstition—not to say Religion—must, to please him, be absolutely extinct, then it becomes interesting, and even venerable. To our mind, the only dull part of these amusing volumes is that which is devoted to 'the antiquities': the digging up of ancient burial-places, and the explorations of possible temples. Yet even here, our author's talent for description does not desert him. Listen. 'In the old prehistoric days, about which we guess so blindly, the scene on this brown savannah must have been not a little striking. Then, as now, the blue mountains walled it round—the light beat as fiercely upon it—the jicara-trees still grew in line across it. But every hill-top within sight was then crowned with its stately cairn, on which the statues of the dead stood up against the sky. Daybreak in that lonely savannah is even yet a glorious sight; but fancy it in old days, when the first ray above the mountain-tops sparkled upon a crowd of worshippers; when a hundred painted banners fluttered in the keen fresh light, as the pipes wailed out their morning-hymn, and the deer-hide cymbals clanged! The sun mounts up, and the people circle round in the sacred dance; the priests chant from the teocalle, sprinkling blood to the five gods. Slowly the long-hid cacique comes forth from the temple door, and climbs into his gold-spread litter. Then the procession streams back over the hills, the people turning as they go to look once more upon that stately scene; and in the night comes the Spaniard, to crush them down into a barbarism more hopeless than that from which they had so lately risen. Ah! To have seen, but for a moment, that brightness of the earth which faded out with the savage old world! We might have been happier, some of us, had we lived in those barbarous days, when men loved and trusted, and thought they knew.'

The description is beautiful; the reflection is Bunkum; and the same remark is unfortunately applicable to the whole of the work before us. Mr Boyle has wit and poetry at command, but his philosophy is as narrow and shortsighted as that of any of the bigots whom he anathematizes so freely. He can see little or nothing admirable in Christian civilisation, but yearns to have lived among these old-world artists (for, of course, their sculptures are most wonderful performances), who possibly were thieves by profession (like Mr Cooper's more northerly heroes), and certainly burned one another alive. He brings forward absolutely nothing but the expression of his own belief to convince us 'how

grand men were in those barbaric times!' For ourselves, we confess we see nothing admirable in 'the many thousand souls employed in heaping up this mighty tomb, bringing the stones for miles, and burying their chieftain with the labour of a nation.' The results of this wasted labour remain, it is true, until this day. But what has come of it all? To be sure it pleases Mr Boyle. But (without offence), was it worth while to make such tremendous exertions for the gratification (after many unappreciative ages) of a single European, or even of three? 'Are our toils more fruitful?' he goes on to ask with bitter scorn. We feel no hesitation in answering: 'Yes—very much so.'

However, we have no wish to quarrel with a most entertaining author who has afforded us much pleasure. That he did not solve the Frio mystery, was no fault of his; he did see things, and has described them, which are mysterious and strange enough to hear of. To read his description, for instance, of the earthquake at Masaya, for which, alas, we have no room, is itself worth a whole annual subscription to Mr Mudie; his full-length life-size portrait, also, of the American 'sportsman' (that is, professional gambler) will take its place in the picture-gallery of human life; while as to his finding the mission of a Serebipiqui squatter, buried alive in pathless woods, and cut off from his fellow-creatures by fordless rivers, a happier and better one than any of those missions believed in at home, and 'backed by the goodness of all stupidity,' we will only answer with good-humour, that we are glad that the charms of squatting on that unpronounceable stream did not prove too much for Mr Boyle, but that he came back to Piccadilly and published his book.

TO MY FRIEND.

You think me 'good and true,' and it is well
For you—for me; and I will never tell
What I am else; for better you be blind,
Than weakly to my faults and follies kind.
I love your charity; would have my friend,
Concerning evil, simple to the end.
You see yourself reflected, see not me,
But something that, through striving, I may be.
You could but shun me, if my heart you knew;
So stand without in sunlight, and look through
The darkened windows still, and never see
The inner chambers' soil and poverty;
While I see you in sunlight clean and white,
And shade my eyes, and feel my night more night.
Friend, call me good; paint the fair picture still;
I shall grow like it; with an earnest will
Will copy the fair draught in every line
From your dear hand, till I have made it mine.
It shall be mine, for we catch good at sight,
Who long for it, as we catch light from light.
Sound the high harmony of perfect law,
For music conquers man, and you shall draw
My wand'ring discords sweet, with silver call;
My pulses set, with yours to rise and fall.

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